CLS Spark Application Worksheet

Use this worksheet to help plan your essay responses and to reflect on your motivations for applying to CLS Spark. This worksheet is **NOT** a part of the CLS application, which is available online at <https://clscholarship.org/apply>

Each essay in the CLS application contains an introductory passage and a set of prompts. You are expected to answer **each** prompt throughout the course of your essay. In this worksheet, we have provided you with additional questions to help you think more deeply about what the prompts are asking of you. These questions appear in the “Ask yourself” sections and are **not** part of the actual application.

We recommend beginning your online application early, as the essays only make up one section of the longer application. In addition to using this document to prepare drafts of your essays, we encourage you to check out more resources for applicants at: [www.clscholarship.org/applicants](http://www.clscholarship.org/applicants)

Essay #1: Motivation & Commitment (350 word maximum)
CLS Spark seeks to support students who are motivated and committed to advancing their knowledge of other languages and cultures to support their long-term academic and professional goals.

Please address the following points:

**What interests you about your chosen language and the region in which it is spoken?**
[Your response]

***Ask yourself:***

* *How does learning this language contribute to my own future, and to the communities I care about at home and abroad?*

**How will increased knowledge of your target language and culture help you achieve your long-term academic or professional goals?**
[Your response]

***Ask yourself:***

* *Have I clearly laid out how participating in CLS Spark will help me achieve my personal, academic and professional goals?*

**What aspects of this program do you anticipate will be the most challenging? What knowledge, skills, and experience will help you sustain your engagement and learning throughout this program?**
[Your response]

***Ask yourself:***

* *Have I provided examples from my past experiences that show I have the skills and knowledge to remain an engaged and successful virtual participant?*

**Tip: Try listing out motivations for learning your target language under three categories: personal, professional and academic. Spend some time reflecting on your motivations and identify which are the strongest and most compelling to include in your responses.**

Essay #2: Access to Language Learning Opportunities (300 word maximum)
CLS Spark seeks to provide true beginners of Arabic, Chinese, and Russian with an opportunity to begin their language learning journey. Students who have taken formal language classes already should look into applying for the overseas CLS Program. Spark prioritizes providing access to critical language learning opportunities for those who lack access or who have encountered barriers to pursuing significant study abroad or language learning opportunities.

Please address the following points:

**What barriers have you encountered in your pursuit of studying your chosen target language?**
[Your response]

***Ask yourself:***

* *Have I provided specific examples of the barriers I have faced to pursuing the study of my target language?*

**How will CLS Spark help you overcome these barriers?**
[Your response]

***Ask yourself:***

* *Have I shown how CLS Spark is a necessary opportunity for me to overcome these barriers and begin my language study?*

**How do you plan to continue your language learning journey after CLS Spark?**
[Your response]

***Ask yourself:***

* *How do I plan to continue the study of my target language after CLS Spark? Have I provided next steps that demonstrate I am committed to the study of this target language and do not hinge on acceptance to the CLS Program overseas?*

**Tip: Research how you will continue studying your target language after CLS-Spark. What opportunities might be available in your community and how might you also leverage the resources and connections you will make through CLS Spark to continue your language study?**

**Essay #3: Statement of Experience (350 word maximum)**

A key goal of CLS Spark is to increase the number and diversity of Americans who study and speak critical languages in order to develop mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Languages offer an opportunity for communication and exchange between people of different backgrounds, both within a U.S.-based cohort and with our partner communities abroad. Spark provides an opportunity for motivated students interested in a common language to form a dedicated, engaged group of learners. Spark scholars will share their unique perspectives in an open-minded, mutually respectful, virtual environment.

Please address the following points:

**How will your unique experiences, perspectives, and/or background contribute to your cohort?**
[Your response]

***Ask yourself:***

* *What distinguishes me from other applicants? How will I contribute to the dynamic among my cohort?*

**How will your unique experiences, perspectives, and/or background contribute towards the goal of building mutual understanding?**
[Your response]

***Ask yourself:***

* *How do I plan to share those things that make me unique with the host culture (my language partner, instructors, cohort, etc.)? Have I demonstrated through examples that I possess the cultural awareness, sensitivity, and maturity to contribute to a respectful and engaged group dynamic?*

**Tip: Ask a trusted friend, family member, teacher or mentor, to help you identify what unique experiences and perspectives you have that make you well-suited to serve as a bridge between the U.S. and the host culture and contribute to a positive virtual group environment.**